

Section 6

Suggested Process for Using the CAHSEE to Increase Student Achievement

The suggested process for using the CAHSEE to increase student achievement is multi-factored. The process requires a thorough understanding of the CAHSEE and the reported results. It also requires an extensive review of the state content standards for English language arts and an analysis of where schools and departments are in the full implementation of standards-based instruction and assessment.

Process Organization

The review process calls for teachers to work individually or as group within English departments and as an expanded group with representatives across the academic curriculum. A recommended organizational structure to complete this process would be to schedule a planning meeting with all members of the English department and department chairs of other major curricular areas. The purpose would be to:

- Review the proposed process and timeline
- Tailor the process to address the unique needs of school staff and students
- Identify roles for individual teachers and/or departments across the curriculum

Steps early in the process call for English language arts teachers to work together. English language arts teachers and representatives from other content areas (department chairs and/or other representatives), however, need to come together to complete the analysis and planning process (steps six and seven below). It is recommended that the process include teachers at grades 9 and 10 at least.

Materials Needed for the Process

The following materials should be available to complete the process for using the CAHSEE to increase student achievement:

- CAHSEE Teacher Guide
- CAHSEE released test questions
- Individual and school reports of results for the most recent CAHSEE administration
- CAHSEE blueprint for English language arts (Appendix B of the Teacher Guide)
- *English Language Arts Content Standards for California Public Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve*
- *Reading-Language Arts Framework for California Public Schools: Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve*
- School and class data related to individual and group achievement in English language arts and local curriculum

Suggested Seven-Step Process

Step One

Present an overview of the CAHSEE results to develop an understanding of the purpose and requirements of the exam and the scores that are reported. A list of suggested process questions is provided in Appendix D to facilitate discussion and/or reflection.

To accomplish step one:

- Review the Questions and Answers for Teachers in this Teacher Guide (Section 2).
- Review individual and school reports for the most recent CAHSEE administration. Identify the types of reports and information provided: (1) on the Student and Parent Report and (2) on the School Report.

Suggested Activity for Analyzing English Language Arts Content Standards

- Look at English language arts standards that are addressed on the CAHSEE
- Underline the primary noun(s) and verb(s) in the standard.
- Identify the essential elements of the standards.

Example:

Standard 2.4 (Reading Comprehension)

Synthesize the content from several sources or works by a single author dealing with a single issue: Paraphrase the ideas and connect them to other sources and related topics to demonstrate comprehension.

Essential elements:

Synthesize content; paraphrase and connect ideas.

Question:

What are students expected to know and to do?

This activity can be used individually or in a group.

- Discuss the scores provided for the individual and group reports, what these scores mean, and their intended uses.

Step Two

Analyze the English language arts content standards addressed on the CAHSEE by strands to identify the knowledge and skills students should be taught to achieve those standards.

A list of suggested process questions is provided in Appendix D to facilitate discussion and/or reflection.

To accomplish step two:

- Review the released test questions from the CAHSEE in English language arts and cluster them by strand.
- Identify the standards addressed on the CAHSEE.
- Analyze each standard addressed on the CAHSEE to identify the essential elements. See Section 5 of this Teacher Guide and use the suggested activity on this page.

Step Three

Have English language arts teachers individually analyze how and when students are addressing identified English language arts content standards in their classes and compile results. A list of suggested process questions is provided in Appendix D to facilitate discussion and/or reflection.

To accomplish step three:

- Review the discussion and outcomes of step two.
- Review the instructional goals, strategies, and activities to determine when, where, and how standards are introduced, reviewed, and reinforced.
- Identify the quality of responses expected from the students.
- Note the criteria and types of assessment(s) used to evaluate student responses.
- Prepare a summary of compiled data to share with other English language arts teachers.

Step Four

Have English language arts teachers as a group use their individual analyses to review their curriculum and classroom instruction for alignment to the state content standards. A list of suggested process questions is provided in Appendix D to facilitate discussion and/or reflection.

To accomplish step four:

- Share results of the teachers' individual analyses of classroom instruction and use this analysis to develop a profile of the instructional program for English language arts.
- Using the developed profile, determine which standards appear to have heavy emphasis or receive little emphasis in the English language arts curriculum (use the *School Curriculum Alignment to State Content Standards* worksheet in Appendix D).
- Develop an agreement on the quality of work or responses that should be expected from students to meet the standards.
- Identify where students, regardless of their schedule or instructional program, have opportunities to learn and apply the English language arts standards.
- Determine what changes, if any, are needed in the curriculum and/or instructional program to ensure that English learners and students with disabilities have opportunities to learn and apply the standards.

Step Five

Review the current year's results for English language arts to identify areas of strength and areas that need improvement in the English language arts curriculum. A list of suggested process questions is provided in Appendix D to facilitate discussion and/or reflection.

To accomplish step five:

- Review the individual and group results in English language arts for the current year.
- Compare these results with other achievement data about individual students and the school.
- Identify areas of strength and areas that need improvement, as indicated by the data.
- Determine areas that are stronger in the group results than they are for some individual students.
- Discuss how and where modifications in the curriculum and/or instructional program could be made to meet identified individual and/or school learning needs.

Step Six

Have English language arts teachers meet with teachers in departments for other subject areas to review the English language arts standards and identify how and when they could reinforce reading and writing skills in their classroom instruction and assignments. A list of suggested process questions is provided in Appendix D to facilitate discussion and/or reflection.

To accomplish step six:

- Summarize the outcomes of step five and discuss curriculum and instructional areas that need reinforcement.
- Discuss how students currently are asked to apply reading and writing skills in the curriculum and instructional programs for other subject areas.
- Determine how and where instructional activities in other subject areas could be modified to help reinforce identified English language arts knowledge and skills that need to be addressed to increase student achievement, as identified in the CAHSEE test results.

Teachers in departments for subject areas other than English language arts may want to review the standards for their content areas prior to this session and bring copies of the standards with them.

Step Seven

Begin program planning and implementation (curriculum, classroom instruction, and assessments process), based on the outcomes of steps two through six. Bring together English language arts teachers and department chairs and/or representatives from other subject areas to help formulate strategies and timelines.

Review of CAHSEE Writing Tasks, Scoring Rubrics, and Sample Student Work with Commentary for Each Score Point (1 – 4)

- What did the task require students to do?
- What writing application skills did students need to use to successfully accomplish the task?
- What changes would need to occur in the sample student work (at score points 1 through 3) to improve the writing sufficiently to qualify it for at least one score point higher than it received?

To accomplish step seven:

- Review key outcomes of steps two through six.
 - Use key outcomes to help develop or modify school and classroom plans to increase student achievement in English language arts.
 - In the plan, identify where, when, and how all students will have multiple opportunities to learn, review, and practice identified English language arts standards.
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- Determine how and when student responses and/or work will be evaluated to monitor progress and identify steps for special instructional assistance for students as needed.
 - Have teachers use the *Suggested Teacher Planning Guide for Designing Standards-based Instruction* in Appendix D to develop or modify classroom activities that address identified content standards.